UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

UNDP

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Country and intercountry programming and projects

COMOROS

Note by the Administrator

Programme period	IPF for 1977-1981
1977-1981	$ 7,200,000

I. Nature of the programming exercise

1. The country programme of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros was prepared by the Government in close collaboration with the UNDP office, without calling on external assistance. In formulating the new activities planned for the current cycle, considerable use was made of the technical observations of the Resident Representative in his note on the country programme and in his evaluation report on the assistance provided by UNDP in the period 1973-1978. In establishing the general outline of UNDP action in the period 1979-1981, the national authorities were also able to draw upon sectoral studies prepared by United Nations specialized agencies, recommendations of expert missions and, more recently, a mission to the Comoros by the Assistant Administrator of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

2. The draft programme, which is the outcome of the programming exercise proper begun in June 1979, has been distributed to all the organizations of the United Nations system, and to other bodies directly concerned with the process of socio-economic development in the Comoros. Their comments and observations were considered by the Government and the UNDP office in Moroni before the final version of the document was drafted.

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II. Relation of the country programme to national development objectives

3. After the coup d'état of May 1978, the new Government of the Comoros was absorbed in the urgent tasks of political and administrative restructuring required following the numerous political upheavals in the Comoros since the attainment of independence in 1975. As a result, it has not yet been able to prepare a national development plan. However, it has already defined the orientation and general outline of its future policy in the principal sectors of activity such as agriculture and rural development, education, health, transport, vocational training and so on.

4. In its present form, the UNDP assistance programme for the Comoros has been centred on strategic areas in which UNDP could act as a catalyst, playing an immediate and effective role in solving the country's development problems.

5. A considerable proportion of available resources has been allocated to the development of agricultural production, especially the production of food-stuffs and animal proteins, through a rural development programme phased over several years, and aimed at the development of water resources, agricultural development for the benefit of the poorest sectors of the rural population, better use of sparse cultivable land, and the development of livestock production. The purpose of all these activities is to achieve self-sufficiency in food which remains the Government's principal objective.

6. Priority has also been accorded to the reorganization of administrative services and the improvement of the planning process, which occupy a key position among the activities covered by the current programme. It was felt necessary to include among "miscellaneous" items a number of projects which are designed to deal with urgent situations and have been emphasized in the Government's development strategy.

III. Content of the programme by sector

7. Rural development absorbs 40 per cent of the programmed funds and occupies the front rank with regard to the use of UNDP resources. The main projects concern the augmentation of food production (including the development of food crops and market gardening, maize, livestock production and the repair of boats for small-scale fishing), the cultivation of the high plateaux, and agricultural training to remedy the lack of qualified workers.

8. Economic and social policy and planning occupy second place, absorbing 18 per cent of the programmed funds. The withdrawal of technical and financial assistance by the former administering Power following independence seriously reduced the capacity of the planning machinery and threw the country's administrative structures into disarray. UNDP is requested to help the Government to formulate its development strategy within the framework of coherent planning, and to strengthen the Comorian administration so that it will be

capable of managing the country's resources to optimum effect. The programme therefore includes a major project concerning management and development planning, a project concerning assistance to the central statistical office, and a project concerning management and administrative methods.

9. Human resources occupy third place, absorbing 15 per cent of the programmed funds; in this sector there is a project for the development of vocational training and a project to strengthen the educational sector.

10. Natural resources account for only 5 per cent of the funds. These funds are to be used for the first phase of a large-scale project for the development of water resources. There will be a considerable extension of activities in this sector in the next cycle.

11. The "miscellaneous" category includes a major project carried out by Habitat and other activities on a smaller scale, such as a United Nations Volunteers programme and a scholarship programme. These activities account for 22 per cent of the programmed funds.

Table I

Sectoral breakdown of programmed resources

Sector	Completed projects		On-going projects		New projects		Total	
	Value ($000)	Per cent	Value ($000)	Per cent	Value ($000)	Per cent	Value ($000)	Per cent
Economy, social policy and planning	73	1	813	11	436	6	1,322	18
Agriculture and rural development	172	2	2,435	34	275	4	2,882	40
Development of human resources	581	8	516	7	-	-	1,097	15
Development of natural resources	-	-	322	5	-	-	322	5
Miscellaneous	240	3	1,229	17	108	2	1,577	22
Total programmed	1,066	14	5,315	74	819	12	7,200	100

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Table II

Phasing of programme expenditures

A. Amounts programmed

Year	($000)
1977	614
1978	374
1979	1,165
1980	3,249
1981	1,798
TOTAL	7,200

B. Resources taken into account

1. Resources available	
(a) IPF resources 1977-1981	7,200
(b) Other resources	-
2. Total resources taken into account for programming	7,200

IV. Special development problems and needs in the Comoros

12. The Comoros archipelago is classed as one of the least developed countries. It is difficult of access, overpopulated and of limited geographical size. Since attaining independence in 1975, it has had to face serious economic problems. Lacking natural resources, with an economy dominated by the colonial past, the country has suffered a chronic deficit in its balance of trade for the past two decades. From the scanty statistics available it is clear that the Government can finance only a very small proportion of its development projects. It will therefore need significant assistance from the international community if it is really to initiate a development process worthy of the name. The country's extremely precarious financial position also prevents the Government from contributing to the operating costs of projects assisted by UNDP, as normally required.

13. As UNDP is unable to meet more than a fraction of the country's substantial needs, the Government wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the list of projects requiring financing, included in annex IV to the country programme.

14. The attention of the Governing Council is also drawn to General Assembly resolution 34/127, adopted on 14 December 1979. In that resolution, the General Assembly, after recalling its resolution 31/42 of 1 December 1976, in which it had invited the international community to assist the Comoros in an effective and continuous manner so as to enable it to face successfully the critical situation resulting from the economic difficulties experienced since its accession to independence, noted with concern that the assistance so far provided fell short of the country's urgent requirements, and that a substantial amount of assistance was still urgently required in order to carry out the projects identified in the report of the mission sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Comoros to prepare a special economic assistance programme for the country. The General Assembly therefore requested the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system to maintain and increase their future programmes of assistance to the Comoros and to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General in organizing an effective international programme of assistance. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also asked UNDP and other organizations of the system to bring the special needs of the Comoros to their governing bodies for consideration.

V. Recommendations of the Administrator

15. Consequently, the Administrator recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the proposed UNDP country programme for the Comoros for the duration of its programme period within the limits of its Indicative Planning Figure for 1977-1981;

(b) Authorize the Administrator to proceed with appraisal and approval action on requests for assistance falling within the outlines of this programme while ensuring, in accordance with the decision of the Governing Council at its eighteenth session (E/5543/Rev.1, para. 31), that expenditures are kept in reasonable conformity with the relevant Indicative Planning Figures and are contained within the financial resources available at any given time.